

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BUREAU OF BIOLOGICAL SURVEY

Form Bi-689

FIELD DIARY

Mr. *Vernon Bailey*

New Mexico, Carlisle.

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Period, *1924* to

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April 29 Took the Ford Truck with
Dana Lee and Jim White and went
to Laughter Canyon, around by Black
River and Washington's ranch, through
20 miles of prairie dog and jack
rabbit country.

Climbed up to first right hand
cave, about 600 feet from bottom of
Canyon up very steep and rough slope,
on east side of canyon near top of
wall, probably 400 feet to real top!

A large open tunnel with arched
doorway half full of debris.
Cave runs back about 300 feet and is
100 wide and about as high.
Is some light to the back end.

Some old but a bird quave but
none of importance or recent deposit.
Owls, swallows, Sayornis and Canyon
wrens nesting in roof.

Ring tail + neotoma + mouse tracks common

Considerable signs of ancient habitation
smoked walls and old fire material.
A hundred Indians could have lived
in it comfortably all winter and
the big mescal pits at the point
of the ridge below show a rather
large Indian population.

There are many drip places with
plenty of water to be caught in dishes.
Old cradled bones show where game
had been used. The cave is
a wonderful stronghold, where the
whole valley can be watched and
a few men could keep back an army
or could escape to the top of
the cliffs above. Food is
abundant in the form of helogulla
& sotol and both deer and mountain
sheep are still here & formerly must
have been numerous.

In afternoon went up to the
Guano cave ^{a mile} above the goat
ranch on east side of east arm
of Canyon but found nothing new
since I was there before. It is only
100 feet above the canyon bottom
easily accessible, larger but of
the same great tunnel form,
probably 1000 feet long and 100
wide and high. A herd of goats
have been occupying it for years
as a winter resort, just as
Mountain sheep and Indians
did 1000 years ago. There is
plenty of water in it, and some
large stalactites and stalagmites but
nothing of great beauty. It was
worth and the light barely reaches
the back end tho the front half is
fairly light. Ring tails, owls,
Saxpines, rats & mice live here

Another cave between the two on the east side of Slaughter Canyon is very deep and dangerous, going down some 200 feet deep in the side of the Canyon wall & only entered by ropes & ladders. Considerable quano has been taken out of it but one man was killed in it and then abandoned.

but 3 dead ingotails show that poison is kept out to kill cats & foxes & mountain lions.

The canyon walls are high and rough and picturesque about it and afford ideal big game and much deer range.

Between these

A few car loads of quano were taken out a dozen years ago but not enough to run grabels and machinery & work.

There is no fresh quano except of the goats, and the old bat quano is large and may be of some larger species of bat and not of Myotis.

Most of the bats that come to water at the goat ranch just below were Eptesicus.

April 30. Went ^{up} the west side of
Slaughter Canyon about 2 miles
to the first cave and climbed
400 feet on its south side up an
old burrow trail to a most
interesting cave where the bigboms
still live and that should be called
Bigbom Cave or Cavern.

It is about halfway up the
wall of a wonderfully picturesque
canyon, ideal range for bigboms
& mule deer and well tracked up by
both. Lots of fresh deer tracks and
fresh beds were seen along the
zigzag trail but when we entered
the cave through a small door on
the east side of a high rocky
ridge and looked out through the
great arched way on our level to
the west and saw the most picturesque
cave ~~door~~ and surroundings ever

saw we forgot about the mud daub
for there were big horn trails entering
the cave door, fresh big horn tracks
in the cave and well worn trails
back to the water pool at the lake.
The cave measured 400 feet in
length, about 100 feet wide and
75 feet for an average height.
It has a fairly level floor with
some piles of debris and some
stalagmite formations built up and
a rough slope of yellow blocks of
limestone on one side.
There are numerous stalactites and
the whole effect is of a great
palace of the cave dwellings of the
dawn of civilization. A dim light
penetrates to the far end but there are
dark corners and under the broken rocks
retreats for many of the smaller animals.
A lower level extends down to the
north with several rooms below but

Not of special interest and a hidden opening on the slope west of the great door runs down 30 or 40 feet into the rocks.

The great door is a garden of flowering trees and shrubs well into the mouth of the cave and the outlook is a wonderful picture of cliffs and terraces, too steep and rough for any domestic stock to ever spail.

Racks and trails and beds of pellets of mountain sheep show this cave to be the winter resort of a considerable number but also a watering place during the year. The sheep guano is deep in places and very old. parts of two ^{old} skulls and some other bones show that they have been killed here and the lack of any Indian signs of life suggest that it was left by the sheep as a convenient place to come and get food when needed. It is a perfect sheep trap.

There are great abundance of tracks of
the snow cat or ringtail, a few grey fox
tracks and also white footed mouse
and bear tracks in it. Both
skull and bear bones were found
and probably bear have been hunted
here in recent years. Of course
mountain lions and bobcats have
been here but both are now scarce.
Wood rats, mice & small tracks are
numerous in dusty places.

The bird fauna is so less
abundant and interesting. A colony
of white throated swifts breed in a
long crack in the roof and there
are some 20 or 30 families and
their young eat a quantity of
wing feathers underneath.
About 3 ear loads of this young
was taken out. The nest was
packed down a barrel and sold

Much of it has been burned or mixed
with hot and big horn quaws.

Half a dozen of the swifts were circling
and shrieking through the cave and
occasionally disappearing in the
crack overhead but the colony has
not yet returned. They make a
wonderful display, cutting out and in
through the great cave door.

A pair of cliff swallows have a
nest in a hole in the roof, a
natural cavity where no mud is
needed. *Sayornis sayi* have one
nest, at least, in the roof of the cave
and a pair of Canyon wrens nest
in the doorway. There is a
beautiful last years hummer nest
on a mulberry twig well back
in the mouth of the cave and
Trochilus alexandri was seen below
Great horned owls nest and roost and

Cave in the cave and gulp up their pellets under every ledge and perching place in the cave. There are some of the tall stalagmites the ground is strewn with bones of all the small rodents, many birds and reptiles of the vicinity and a gallon can was filled with these for more careful examination. There are still bushels of bones lying on the ground for more extended study of future naturalists.

Several quail and shells were picked up with the bones, but not a part of the owl food.

Took many photographs of cave and plants and general views of the canyon.

Water is scarce in the canyon but is found in most of the caves and in several springs in each canyon or on the slopes. Returned to Carlsbad Cave in P.M.

May 1. Packed up and shipped a
lot of specimens and went to
Carlsbad in P.M. to get them off.

May 2 - Went cave hunting with
Carl Livingston and Bob Dow,
first to a cave in top of limestone
hill a mile NW of Santa Fe tank,
where I shot *Urotaenia* in
1901 as they came to water from
this cave. Found a thousand, I
should guess, hanging to the roof
in a great mass huddled together
in back end of cave. Caught a few
but left them for a photograph.
Caught a young Diamond back
rattlesnake in cave.

-Visited a rattlesnake den near there
where 19 were killed a year ago as
they were lying about the entrance of
a low cave opening in the limestone ledge.

Birds

Saw a fine Golden Eagle
Red tail Hawks nesting
Swainson Hawks, a pair on pines
Corvus cryptoleucus, common in pines.
Callipepla squamata, a few pairs seen.
Cliff swallows, nesting in ~~Dark~~ Dark Canyon,
Burrowing owl, 1 seen
Bubo, bones under nests in caves.
Lanius, common on pines
Calamospiza, abundant in flocks
up to 100, largely black throats.
Sturnus perisoreus, common in canyon.
Scissortail, said to breed at
-Livengston Ranch, 35 miles east of Carlsbad.

Went up Dark Canyon and into
two caves in the canyon wall
where Indians had lived and
had comfortable quarters. Found
a few bits of old bones of game and
men and lots of small bones from
Owl pellets. Both caves had secret
chambers that should be carefully
excavated. Many old vertical
pits and graving holes seen.
Plenty of Lechuguilla and Sotol and
Mesquite and Indian tobacco and
good soil for raising corn and
squashes. Stacks of Ocotillo and
Cactus and other desert types of
vegetation of Lower Sonoran Zone.
Rained in night and again after
noon.
Returned to Carlsbad Cave in
evening.

May 3. Came to town and out to the
bat cave in Bob Dow's Pasture
4½ miles west of town and half a mile
west of where I shot *Myotis evotis*
in 1901. Used flashlight powder
in a blow flare while Mr. Lee took
moving pictures of the bats in a
mass and as they flew from the low
ceiling of the cave. Took snap-
shots also but they are not likely
to be good. I think 1000 bats
would be a fair estimate of the number
in the cave & they seem to be all
Evotis. Caught a bag full alive.

The rains yesterday have brought
out the lizards more than any time
before. Saw two *Crotaphytus wislizeni*
many *Holbrookias* & a small black
Sceloporus.

Xerocryptus cuneatus ~~is~~ in bloom
the first seen.

May 4 88, remained at camp
writing up reports, packing specimens
and getting ready to go home.
Mostly warm and clear but
no real hot days.

Suffering from grip or some kind
of fever and not able to do much work.

May 9, Came to Carlisburg in
morning and got ready to leave
tomorrow

May 10, Took 7:30 train north
to Clovis where I caught train
to Chicago next morning -

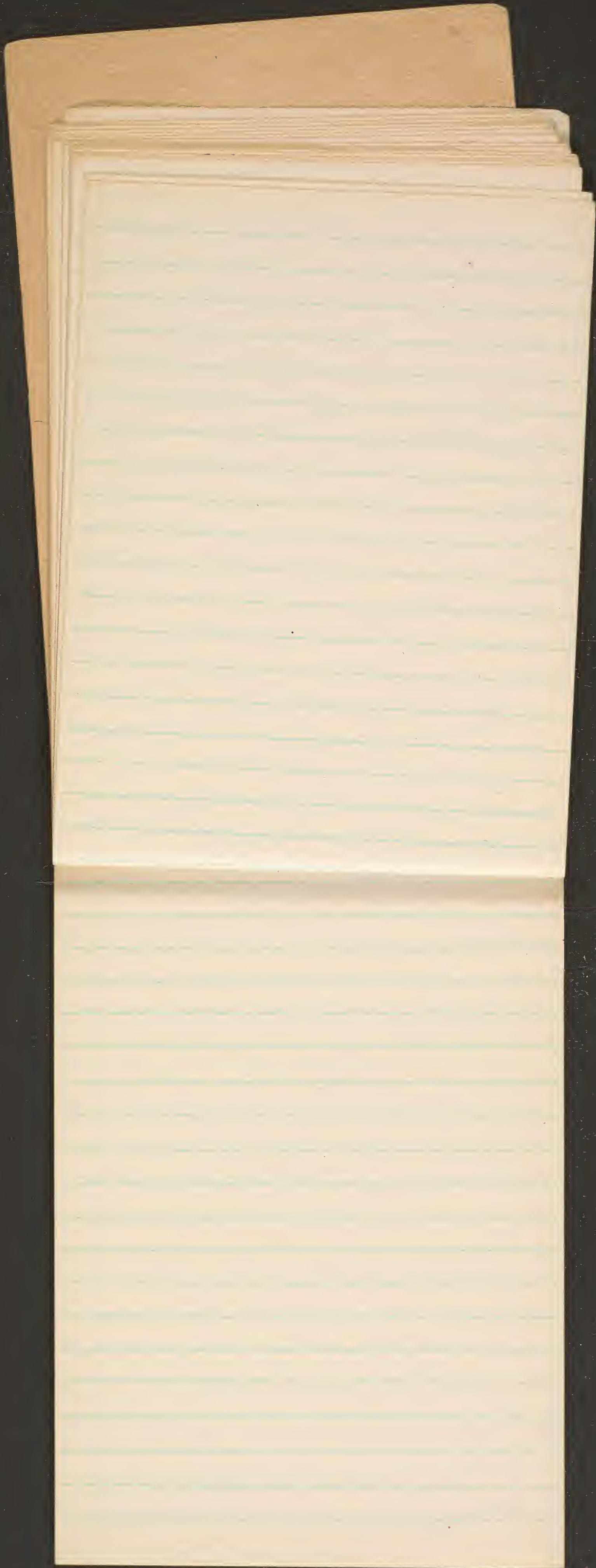
May 11, all day through Texas, Oklahoma
and into southern Kansas.

May 12, Reached Chicago 7:45
PM and transferred to Pa. depot
& left there 11:30 PM for Pittsburg.

May 13, Left Pittsburg in morning
and arrived in Washington
10:13 PM. on time.

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